

Remarks

Minor corrections have been made to the specification. Claims 2-40 and 44 have been cancelled, claims 1, 41, and 45 have been amended, and claims 46-53 have been added. Claims 1, 41-43, and 45-53 now stand in the application.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-8, 21, 22, 24, 26-28, and 41-45 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Luhmann U.S. Patent No. 5,409,189, and claims 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 12, 15, 16-22, 24, 26-30, 32, and claims 35-45 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Luhmann U.S. Patent No. 5,409,189.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to indicate that the separable connector surface is defined by a plurality of interengaging elements. Support for this amendment appears at page 10, lines 18-20, and page 14, lines 4-18 of the specification. In addition, the separable connector surface possesses the ability to be connected, disconnected and reconnected to a cooperating connection surface. The cited Luhmann U.S. Patent No. 5,409,189, in contrast, does not disclose such a separable connector surface. Rather, Luhmann discloses a hook device including a base plate having a single peg-shaped extension extending from the upper region of a base plate. Thus, Luhmann differs structurally from the present invention as defined in amended claim 1 in that it discloses a baseplate with a single peg-shaped extension, not a separable connector surface comprising a plurality of interengaging elements, and there is no motivation, teaching, or suggestion to modify the Luhmann device to include a plurality of interengaging elements.

In addition, the device of Luhmann differs functionally from the present invention in that it does not disclose a separable connector surface possessing the ability to mate with a cooperating connection surface. Rather, Luhmann discloses a hook. Luhmann makes no mention of a cooperating connection surface, and there is no motivation to use the Luhmann device to mate with a cooperating connection surface. Accordingly, independent claim 1, as amended, is believed to be patentable over the cited reference.

Independent claim 41 has been amended to indicate that the separable connector surface comprises an array of elements distributed over at least a portion of the second surface of the backing layer and is believed to be patentable over the cited Luhmann reference for the reasons set forth above for claim 1.

Independent claim 45 has been amended to indicate that the separable connector surface comprises a hook and loop connector system. Since none of the cited references disclose a stretch releasing adhesive tape including a separable connector comprising a hook and loop connector system, claim 45, as amended, is believed to be patentable.

Canceled dependent claim 3 has been re-written in independent form as new claim 51. Accordingly, new claim 51 is directed to an adhesive tape including a separable connector surface comprising a surface of low-tack adhesive covering at least a portion of the second major surface of the first backing layer. Since claim 3 was indicated to contain allowable subject matter, claim 51 is believed to be allowable. Similarly, cancelled dependent claim 5, which was indicated to contain allowable subject matter, has been re-written in independent form as new claim 52 and is also believed to be allowable.

Cancelled dependent claim 8 has been re-written in independent form as new claim 53. Accordingly, the separable connector surface is indicated to comprise a layer of contact responsive material. None of the cited reference discloses an adhesive tape including a separable connector layer including a layer of contact responsive material. Thus, Applicant believes that claim 8 should have been indicated to contain allowable subject matter and further believes that claim 53 is allowable. Reconsideration is requested.

The remaining dependent claims, as depending from allowable claims, are also deemed to be in condition for allowance. It is submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance. If a telephonic conference would be helpful in resolving any

outstanding matters in the present application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: JUNE 7, 2000

By David B. Patchett
David B. Patchett
Registration No. 39,326

3M Innovative Properties Company
Office of Intellectual Property Counsel
P.O. Box 33427
St. Paul, Minnesota 55133-3427
(651) 736-4713